

Message Text

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15

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01

DHA-02 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 AGR-05 AGRE-00

/077 W

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R 032001Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3351

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 1774

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, GY

SUBJECT: PM WARNS AGAINST SABOTEURS

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM, IN A SPEECH TO THE PEOPLE'S MILITIA SEPTEMBER 1, GAVE AN UNUSUALLY FORCEFUL WARNING TO SABOTEURS AND AGENTS OF FOREIGN POWERS. HE HINTED THEY SHOULD NOT EXPECT TO ENJOY THE PROTECTIONS OF CIVIL AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS WHEN CAUGHT. THE VEHEMENCE OF HIS SPEECH PERHAPS WAS MOTIVATED BY THE DESTRUCTION ON THE PREVIOUS EVENING BY FIRE OF A US DOLS 1 MILLION RICE MILLING COMPLEX AND BY OTHER RECENT SUSPECTED INCIDENTS OF ARSON RELATED TO THE PRESENT STRIKE IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY. HE TOLD THE MILITIAMEN THAT GUYANA'S CHOICE OF A SOCIALIST PATH TO DEVELOPMENT HAD ATTRACTED ENEMIES AND THAT GUYANESE SHOULD NOT BE LULLED INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY JUST BECAUSE GUYANA WAS ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA. BURNHAM'S WORDS REFLECT THE DEPTH OF CONCERN WITHIN THE GOG OVER GROWING UNREST IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY. END SUMMARY.

1. PM BURNHAM, IN AN INFREQUENT APPEARANCE IN MILITARY DRESS (THE SECOND OR POSSIBLY THIRD TIME), HAS WARNED MEMBERS OF THE
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RECENTLY FORMED PEOPLE' MILITIA (GPM) TO BE ALERT TO THE DANGER

WHICH GUYANA FACES FROM SABOTEURS. ADDRESSING A CROWD WHICH INCLUDED THE TOP-RANKING MEMBERS OF ALL FOUR OF THIS NATION'S MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY ORGANIZATIONS (THE GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE-GDF

, THE POLICE, THE GUYANA NATIONAL SERVICE- GNS, AND THE GPM) THE PM ASSERTED THAT GUYANA'S CHOICE OF THE SOCIALIST PATH TO DEVELOPMENT HAD ATTRACTED ENEMIES, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT WAS IN OPPOSITION TO THE "DESIRES AND INTEREST OF THOSE WHO ONCE DOMINATED GUYANA".

2. NOTING THAT OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENT REGIME NEED NOT BE IN THE FORM OF A FOREIGN ARMY, HE CAUTIONED THAT "WHEN THE OCCASION ARISES TO DEAL WITH SABOTEURS AND AGENTS OF FOREIGN POWERS, LET THERE BE NO CRY ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS... THERE ARE NO LAWS TO PROTECT THE TREACHEROUS AND THE TRAITOROUS".

3. BURNHAM DESCRIBED THE GPM AS THE FIRST RESERVES OF THE ARMY. HE URGED ITS MEMBERS NOT TO BE LULLED INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY JUST BECAUSE GUYANA WAS ON FRIENDLY TERMS WITH ALL COUNTRIES "EXCEPT SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA". HE NOTED THAT EVEN IN COUNTRIES WITH FRIENDLY GOVTS, THERE MAY BE CERTAIN CIRCLES OPPOSED TO GUYANA WHICH MIGHT PROVOKE AN INCIDENT.

4. COMMENT: BURNHAM'S REMARKS REGARDING SABOTAGE MAY HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY SEVERAL RECENT INCIDENTS OF APPARENT ARSON IN PREDOMINANTLY EAST INDIAN AREAS HERE. ONE CONFLAGRATION CAUSED NEARLY US DOLS 1 MILLION DAMAGE TO AN IMPORTANT RICE-MILLING COMPLEX (THE THIRD FIRE THERE IN 15 MONTHS) IN BERBICE. SEVERAL TONS OF CANE HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY FIRE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE SUGAR WORKER'S STRIKE LAST MONTH.

5. THE GOG-CONTROLLED MEDIA IS ATTEMPTING TO PORTRAY THE SUGAR STRIKE AS UNPATRIOTIC, CITING THE HARM IT IS DOING TO THE NATION'S ECONOMY. THE PM'S COMMENTS, WHICH RECEIVED WIDE MEDIA ATTENTION, MAY BE A PREMONITION OF HARSHER GOVT ACTION IN DEALING WITH THE SITUATION. SUCH ACTION, HOWEVER, WOULD AFFECT THE EAST INDIANS THE MOST, AND WOULD TEND TO EXACERBATE WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A RACIAL PROBLEM. THE REFERENCE TO RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA AGAIN UNDERLINES THE PREOCCUPATION OF GUYANESE LEADERS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN MATTERS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SABOTAGE, COUNTERINSURGENCY, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976GEORGE01774
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760336-0452
From: GEORGETOWN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760994/aaaadcht.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <08 JUL 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PM WARNS AGAINST SABOTEURS SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM, IN A SPEECH TO THE PEOPLE'S MILITIA SEPTEMBER 1, GAVE AN UNUSUALLY FORCEFUL WAR
TAGS: PINS, PFOR, GY
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006